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President's Report

AITPM President's Message, May 2010

We've had a bit of sticker shock in these parts. Well, apparently. Since my last missive, Brisbane's Clem Jones Tunnel which was initially free now has a toll, at least partially, at the introductory rate of \$2.95 for a one-way car ride between 5a.m. and midnight – free overnight. From 9 May 2010 the toll will be \$4.28. Since the introductory toll was introduced, use of the tunnel appears to have declined somewhat – no surprise to transport professionals I suppose. An additional factor may have been that the "novelty value" of driving through the tunnel for free had worn off. This demonstrates to me that much of the community may still see the use of road infrastructure as a rite of passage, with only some actually weighing up the true value of their travel time and vehicle wear and tear against their out of pocket (or onto credit card) cost. Thus, we're in pioneering times and the role of transport economics in the overall transport infrastructure planning realm is of considerable importance – especially as much of the new big ticket infrastructure is likely to be tolled into the future. The Queensland Premier, Anna Bligh, made poignant commentary about Brisbane City Council's tunnel use in that such infrastructure is built for future times and not just as a quick fix for current traffic problems. My expectation is that once Airport Link, which is really the northern half of the corridor, opens in 2012, there will be a significant spike in Clem7 usage.

Have a rewarding May,

Jon Bunker

Now onto a particular bug-bare of mine: Speeding by professional drivers through roadwork zones that have a reduced speed limit. Currently one of Brisbane's critical motorways is having additional lanes added, and as such concrete barriers have been placed on the kerb side to protect the work site, requiring narrower lanes for the traffic. The speed limit has been dropped accordingly from 100km/h to 80km/h. Late this morning I needed to drive the road. I kept to the left lane and travelled at 80km/h through the long, active work zone, which does have some slightly tricky geometry for a motorway. I was surprised at how many professionally driven heavy vehicles including B-doubles were passing me in the right hand lane by at least 10 to 15km/h over the work zone limit of 80km/h while traffic flow appeared to be operating in the Level of Service D regime and furthermore I felt a little intimidated by them being in narrow lanes. These vehicles have operator's names plastered all over the prime movers and client's names, such as large supermarkets, all over the trailers. It's not appropriate for me to name names in this forum, but professional drivers should be sent a clear message about their workplace health and safety responsibilities, which were so overtly and numerous being flouted.

Planning is well underway for our Conference this year and I look forward to catching up with members old, new and future.



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